

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07  
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00  
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R 281632Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3639  
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
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AMEMBASSY BONN  
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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMCONSUL NAPLES  
AMCONSUL FLORENCE  
AMCONSUL MILAN  
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS  
DIA  
USDOCOSOUTH  
US CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5103

US DOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, IT  
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SUBJECT: PCI NEWSPAPER REPORTS AWACS ADOPTION

1 . UNDER HEADLINE QUOTE NEW AND HEAVY MILITARY OBLIGATIONS  
IMPOSED BY THE USA ON THE NATO ALLIES END QUOTE, THE ITALIAN  
COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) DAILY L'UNITA MARCH 27 REPORTS  
DECISION TAKEN BY THE NATO DEFENSE PLANS COMMITTEE TO  
PROCEED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AWACS SYSTEM.

THE ARTICLE NOTES THAT THE PROGRAM WILL COST APPROXIMATELY THREE BILLION DOLLARS, THAT GREAT BRITAIN AND ITALY EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE DECISION TO PROCEED WITH ITS DEVELOPMENT, AND THAT THE DIVISION OF THE COSTS REMAINS TO BE WORKED OUT.

2. ACCORDING TO L'UNITA THE DECISION TAKEN AT BRUSSELS WAS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY STRONG PRESSURE FROM THE UNITED STATES WHICH INCLUDED A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER DEFINING THE SYSTEM AS QUOTE IMPORTANT FOR THE ALLIANCE AND FOR THE RECIPROCAL SECURITY OF THE ALLIES. END QUOTE. BRITISH DEFENSE MINISTER MULLEY REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE COST OF THE PROGRAM AND THE USE OF THE BOEING 707 AIRCRAFT TO IMPLEMENT IT SINCE THE BRITISH ARE DEVELOPING THEIR OWN AIRCRAFT THAT COULD BE USED. THE ARTICLE ADDS THAT ITALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER LATTANZIO HAD SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF THE ADOPTION OF AWACS BUT INFORMED THE NATO ALLIES THAT ITALY COULD NOT AFFORD TO MAKE MORE THAN A SYMBOLIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROGRAM.

3. THE ARTICLE WHICH HAS A BRUSSELS DATELINE BUT WHICH WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN IN ROME USING WIRE SERVICE REPORTS FROM THERE, CONCLUDES BY EDITORIALIZING ABOUT THE ACTION TAKEN AT BRUSSELS. IT CALLS THE DECISION ONE THAT QUOTE IS GRAVE AND ERRONEOUS END QUOTE AND ONE TO WHICH ITALY SHOULD NOT COMMIT ITSELF. ACCORDING TO L'UNITA THE AWACS IS AN OUTMODED  
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PROJECT THAT IS TOO EXPENSIVE AND NOT CONVINCING FROM A PURELY MILITARY STANDPOINT. FURTHERMORE, THE NEWSPAPER NOTES THAT THE DECISION CALLS INTO QUESTION THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND NATO GIVEN THE AMERICAN PRESSURE TO ADOPT A PROGRAM USING ONE OF ITS OWN TYPES OF AIRPLANES. FINALLY, THE ARTICLE OBSERVES THAT THE DECISION GIVES A NEW INPUT TO THE ARMS RACE, WHICH WILL PROVOKE REACTIONS AND COUNTERREACTIONS, PRECISELY AT THE MOMENT IN WHICH SECRETARY VANCE IS IN MOSCOW NEGOTIATING WITH THE SOVIETS FOR PROGRESS ON A SALT II AGREEMENT AND WHEN PREPARATIONS ARE GOING FORWARD FOR THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE DESIGNED TO PROMOTE DETENTE AND SECURITY IN EUROPE.

4. COMMENT. WHILE THE ARTICLE DOES NOT HAVE THE SEAL OF APPROVAL OF THE PCI LEADERSHIP SINCE IT IS NOT A SIGNED EDITORIAL, THE FACT THAT IT APPEARS IN THE PARTY DAILY GIVES IT AN OFFICIAL

STANDING. FROM OUR VANTAGE POINT, THE ARTICLE REPRESENTS  
A CLEAR PORTRAIT OF THE CONTRADICTIONS OF THE PCI WHEN  
IT TALKS ABOUT NATO, AND IT PROVIDES INSIGHTS INTO  
WHAT THE NATO ALLIES COULD EXPECT IN THE FUTURE FROM  
AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WHOSE MOVES WERE CONDITIONED  
BY DIRECT COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN A RULING COALITION.  
IN THE ARTICLE, THE PCI POINTS AGAIN TO THE  
NEED TO END U.S. HEGEMONY WITHIN NATO RANKS, AND SHOWS  
ITS RELUCTANCE AT MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS  
IMPROVING NATO'S DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES UNDER THE  
GUISE THAT ANY MILITARY DEVELOPMENT RUNS COUNTER TO THE  
OBJECTIVES OF DETENTE AND DISARMAMENT. IN ANY EVENT,  
THE POSITION PRESENTED IN THE ARTICLE DOES NOT  
AUGUR WELL IN TERMS OF A POSITIVE ITALIAN CONTRIBUTION  
TO OVERALL NATO OBJECTIVES SHOULD THE PCI SUCCEED IN  
ACHIEVING A DIRECT SHARE IN THE GOVERNING OF ITALY.GARNER

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Review Markings:**  
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